

Emergency Support Function #9 Urban Search and Rescue

Primary District Agency: DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department

Support District Agencies: DC National Guard
Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
Department of Health
Department of Human Services
Department of Mental Health
Department of Public Works
Emergency Management Agency
Metropolitan Police Department
Office of Contracting and Procurement
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Non-Governmental Organizations:

George Washington University Medical Center
Howard University Hospital
Potomac Electric Power Company
Washington Gas Company

Lead Federal Agency: Federal Emergency Management Agency

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

ESF #9—Urban Search and Rescue rapidly deploys components of the DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (DCFEMS) to provide specialized lifesaving assistance in the event of a public emergency involving structural collapse or other cave in.

B. Scope

Operational activities include conducting physical search and rescue in collapsed buildings; providing emergency medical care to trapped victims; assessment and control of gas and electricity and hazardous materials; and evaluating and stabilizing damaged structures.

II. Policies

- A. As the primary agency for ESF #9, DCFEMS develops urban search-and-rescue (US&R) policy, provides planning guidance and coordination assistance, standardizes unit procedures, evaluates operational readiness, and funds special equipment and training requirements.
- B. An Incident Command System (ICS) will be implemented to effectively manage and control resources at the scene of emergencies.
- C. The Personal Accountability System will be used as an incident site US&R accountability system to track and control the movement of DCFEMS personnel.
- D. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) are predetermined standardized US&R practices that enable the firefighting units to operate in a coordinated and safer method.

III. Situation

A. Disaster Condition

Public emergencies vary widely in scope, degree of devastation, and threat to human life. For example:

- 1. In situations that entail structural collapse, large numbers of people may require rescue and medical care.
- 2. Because the mortality rate among trapped victims rises dramatically after 72 hours, US&R must be initiated without delay.
- 3. In the course of response, rescue personnel may encounter extensive damage to the infrastructure, such as buildings, roadways, public works, communications, and utilities. Such damage can create environmental safety and health hazards, such as downed power lines, unsafe drinking water, and unrefrigerated food.
- 4. Weather conditions such as temperature extremes, snow, rain, and high winds may pose additional hazards for emergency victims and rescue personnel.
- 5. In some circumstances, rescue personnel may be at risk from terrorism, civil disorder, or crime.

B. Planning Assumptions

1. Many structural collapses may result from a natural disaster. They also may occur as the result of a significant manmade event.
2. At the time of a public emergency, there may be structural collapses elsewhere in the District. These structural collapses will draw upon the same resources (engines or other tactical and support resources) that would be needed to support US&R and other emergency operations. It must be assumed that some US&R resources will become scarce, resulting in the disaster-related US&R operations competing for resources.
3. Telephone communications may be interrupted.
4. DCFEMS 800-MHz radio communication may be partially interrupted.
5. Access may be hampered by bridge failures, traffic, landslides, damaged road systems, air traffic restrictions, etc., making conventional travel to the incident location extremely difficult or impossible.
6. Depending on the scope of the incident, Mutual Aid Agreements may need to be enacted to allow DCFEMS to access additional US&R resources from surrounding jurisdictions.
7. Efficient and effective mutual aid among the various local, state, and federal US&R teams requires the use of ICS together with compatible US&R equipment and communications.
8. Local residents, workers, and/or converging volunteers may initiate search-and-rescue efforts but will usually lack specialized equipment and training. (See ESF #15—Donations and Volunteer Management.)
9. In situations where there are significant US&R shortfalls in the area, and a Presidential Declaration of disaster or emergency has been made, ESF #9 may request federal assistance from FEMA and Federal ESF #9 US&R resources through the Consequence Management Team (CMT).

IV. Concept of Operations

A. General

DCFEMS, as the primary agency for ESF #9, will activate the US&R system for any incident or anticipated incident that is determined likely to result in collapsed structures. The likelihood of activation depends on the nature and magnitude of the event, the suddenness of onset, and the existence of US&R resources in the

affected area. The DCFEMS US&R team is able to remain self-sufficient for approximately 48 hours.

B. Organization

1. The US&R system is an integrated system of US&R units, support teams, and technical specialists.
2. The system is built around core units prepared to deploy immediately and initiate US&R operations on implementation of ESF #9 of the District Response Plan. Primarily, DCFEMS personnel who are experienced and trained in collapsed structure search-and-rescue operations staff these units.
3. Incident Support Teams (ISTs) provide coordination and logistical support to US&R units during emergency operations. They also conduct needs assessments and provide technical advice. Teams are formed with personnel from US&R units, District government emergency response organizations, and private sector organizations.
4. Technical specialists provide expertise in various US&R disciplines. They are mobilized as needed from within the District and surrounding jurisdictions.

C. Notification

1. In most cases, these types of incidents are reported directly to 911 at the Public Safety Communications Center.
2. Upon notification by the Emergency Management Agency (EMA) of a potential or actual event requiring response, beyond normal response operations, the fire EMS chief or designee will ensure a telephone call or page through the DCFEMS Communications Center notifies all senior command staff officials.
3. Mutual aid support will generally be requested through DCFEMS Communications Center and coordinated through EMA when necessary.
4. Notification of incidents, with the potential for structural collapse, may be received by the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) from a number of sources. EMA will notify Fire EMS.

D. Response Actions

1. Initial Actions

- a. The ESF #4 Coordinator—a DCFEMS officer with the rank of fire captain or higher, who will have a working knowledge of the SOPs, resources, and capabilities of DCFEMS, will:
 - Locate at the EOC within two hours of notification;
 - Establish communication links with primary and/or support agencies;
 - Establish communication links with the Incident Commanders;
 - Establish communications links with the DCFEMS senior command staff;
 - Obtain an initial situation and damage assessment through established intelligence procedures; and
 - Contribute to situation reports.
- b. Immediately following initiation of operations, the ESF #9 coordinator will establish and maintain a chronological log of US&R events and information obtained from the field.
- c. DCFEMS Operations will:
 - During the initial stages of the public emergency, serve as the single point of contact (POC) for responding task forces and IST members for situation information and response status of US&R resources;
 - Provide command and control of incidents and institute incident management system including unified command as necessary.
 - Provide trained US&R personnel to the scene and activate the department's Mobilization Plan as necessary to call additional personnel.
 - Provide sufficient technical equipment for immediate delivery to the scene.
 - Perform search and rescue as necessary.
 - Perform triage and emergency medical treatment as necessary and provide emergency medical technicians and paramedics to the scene with appropriate equipment.
 - Perform emergency medical transportation as necessary and provide EMS transport units to the scene.

2. Continuing Actions

- a. Retain an adequate on-duty force of US&R-trained personnel.
- b. Maintain preloaded shoring and bracing equipment truck(s).
- c. Maintain readily available back-up supplies.
- d. Ensure critical medical supplies are replenished.
- e. Activate agreements for emergency resupply as needed.
- f. Attain sufficient reserve ambulances to enable additional units to be placed in service as required.
- g. Request additional resources as necessary.

V. Responsibilities

A. Primary District Agency

DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (DCFEMS)—

DCFEMS will coordinate the search-and-rescue operations and the use of rescue and extrication resources during public emergencies. The DCFEMS US&R team is dispatched with Fire and Emergency Medical units to incidents involving search-and-rescue efforts. Fire and Emergency Medical units will provide on-scene, pre-hospital emergency medical care.

DCFEMS establishes, maintains, and manages the US&R response system, including pre-emergency activities such as training, equipment purchase, and evaluation of operational readiness.

DCFEMS maintains a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with appropriate agencies to ensure a functional US&R team is maintained by having necessary specialists, not available with DCFEMS, trained and ready to respond as needed. DCFEMS also maintains mutual aid agreements to ensure additional immediate response if necessary from surrounding jurisdictions.

DCFEMS responds to and coordinates US&R operations for incidents of collapsed structures and the use of rescue and extrication resources during acts of terrorism.

B. Support District Agencies

1. **DC National Guard (DCNG)**—DCNG provides search-and-rescue capability as well as temporary emergency shelters. DCNG can also

provide traffic control, emergency transportation, evacuation of civilian population, communications assistance, area security, protection from theft and looting, medical services, aircraft for monitoring, surface radiation monitoring, radiation hazard plotting, wind and weather data, and control of reentry as needed, during US&R.

2. **Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA)**—DCRA will provide information and building plans for unsafe or collapsed structures to the extent that such information is available and plans exist. DCRA will also provide structural engineers to inspect these structures and serve on the IST.
3. **Department of Health (DOH)**—DOH will coordinate health and medical activities within the District through clinical assessment and management by health care facilities, mental health assistance for those affected, and assessment of health and medical needs.
4. **Department of Human Services (DHS)**—DHS helps provide for evacuees' needs, including food, bedding, supplies, and transportation using contractual services of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross (ARC).
5. **Department of Mental Health (DMH)**—DMH will coordinate mental health activities within the District through needs assessment and provision of critical incident stress management (CISM) for first responders and crisis counseling for victims/families and special vulnerable populations.
6. **Department of Public Works (DPW)**—DPW will provide on-site refueling and on-site sand and salt as necessary for slippery conditions. DPW will provide debris removal in accordance with their Debris Removal Plan (under development). In concert with the Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP), DPW will help coordinate heavy equipment, operators, and riggers to support US&R efforts as necessary, per the Debris Removal Plan (under development).
7. **Emergency Management Agency (EMA)**—EMA will provide a logistical/resource specialist for IST. The mobile command van will be dispatched to the scene to gather information on the type of hazardous material involved and other data.
8. **Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)**—MPD will provide site perimeter security, traffic control, staging area security, and assistance with emergency evacuations during and after an incident to protect the health and safety of persons and the integrity of the incident scene. MPD will also perform criminal investigations as necessary, and canine assistance as available, for US&R activities.

9. **Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP)**—OCP will provide procurement specialist to assist ISTs in acquiring necessary contracts, services, and resources.
10. **Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME)**—OCME will respond to the scene and provide coordination of mass fatality efforts, including investigating, establishing temporary morgue(s), coordinating transportation of remains, performing postmortem examinations and identifications, securing evidence, certifying cause and manner of death, and releasing remains.
11. **Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)**—WMATA responds with DCFEMS to any incident involving collapses and other situations in underground Metro property; provides backup resources when District agency resources, personnel, and equipment must be supplemented in response to an incident that impacts Metro property; and provides Metro buses, as needed, for evacuating the population.
12. **George Washington University Medical Centers and Howard University Hospital**—These hospitals will provide “go teams” for specific medical care, such as trauma response for smoke inhalation victims.
13. **Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO)**—PEPCO will provide emergency response teams to address electric power utility disconnects as necessary.
14. **Washington Gas Company (WGC)**—WGC will provide emergency response teams to address natural gas utility disconnects as necessary.

C. Lead Federal Agency

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—FEMA is the lead federal agency for ESF #9 under the Federal Response Plan and will provide direct, technical, and other support to the District through the District counterpart ESF, in this case DCFEMS, if needed, including calling in US&R teams from across the country.

Upon the declaration of an emergency or major disaster by the President under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief Act as Amended, April 1999, FEMA and other federal departments and agencies will implement the FRP. Initially, these agencies will operate out of the FEMA Regional Operations Center. Later, when the Disaster Field Office (DFO) is established near the disaster area, the agency ESF representatives that comprise the Emergency Response Team will be in the DFO. FEMA US&R teams will deploy to the disaster site when requested to assist the Incident Commander in operations.